



# Jon Frederick Karner

*Well done, good and faithful servant.*



Jon Karner  
1945-2007

Our beloved friend, **Jon Frederick Karner**, died on Pentecost Sunday, May 27, 2007, at the age of 62 in Princeton, Minnesota from stomach cancer. Jon was born in Hiiumaa, Estonia on February 13, 1945 to Frederick and Maria as Jaanus Frederick Kärner. An accomplished mechanical engineer by education, his Christian convictions ran him afoul of the communist authorities who obstructed his academic and professional pursuits, prevented him from completing his master's degree and assigned him menial jobs. Jon turned these circumstances meant to demean Christians into opportunities to hone his considerable skills and to become a highly effective national leader of the Christian underground in the former Soviet Union.

Jon's accomplishments are legion. He was an active preacher and teacher as well as leader of youth and music in The Tallinn Methodist Church. He was ordained a deacon in The United Methodist Church in Estonia in 1979. In 1968 he founded Sela, the first Estonian gospel music group to use electronic instruments. Jon and the members of Sela formed a close working relationship over many years with the international Gospel music missions ministry Living Sound. Sela is still active today. Jon was repressed because of this work; some involved were even imprisoned by the Soviet state secret police, the KGB. He also became the main liaison between many international Christian ministries and their missions in the Soviet Union. Much of this story has yet to be told. He was also an Estonian patriot, and he equally loved his adopted country, the United States of America. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Jon assisted numerous Christian ministries to establish their fledgling efforts in Russia and the Baltic States – and all this in addition to his Estonian Living Bible translation work, study at Fuller Theological Seminary and his involvement with Vineyard Missions. In 2006 Jon was named Estonia Gospel Music's "Man of the Year" for his lifetime of achievements.

Jon is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, his sons David of Huntington Beach, California and Steven of Redondo Beach, California, and stepson, Bret Ittel of St. Francis, Minnesota. Jon is also survived by his sisters Wilma and Maimo of Tallinn, Estonia. He is preceded in death by his father, Frederick, his mother, Marie, his sisters Eve, Ellen, Silia, Mari and his first wife, Anne.

A viewing and special memorial service will be held on Friday, June 1, 2007 from 5:00-8:00PM at the Jubilee Worship Center, Pastor Mark Johnson, 3125 County Road 74, St. Cloud, Minnesota 56301, (320) 202-0540. Friends and loved ones will be invited to share their memories of Jon from 7:00-8:00 PM at the Friday service. The Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, June 2, 2007 at 12:00 NOON also at Jubilee Worship Center. The church will open on Saturday starting at 11:00 AM to pay final respects and for remembrance and prayer. A luncheon will be served at the church followed by a burial service in Milaca, Minnesota.

Donations for the family's expenses can be sent to: **The Jon Karner Memorial Fund**, c/o Glenn Martell, Esq., gm112@yahoo.com, P.O. Box 120703, St. Paul, MN 55112-0022, (612) 235-4617. Elizabeth Karner's email address is <ebkarner@leader.com>. David Karner's email address is <davidkarner@gmail.com> and Steven Karner's email address is <stevekarner@aol.com>. You are invited to share your reflections about Jon's life, ministry and witness online at <<http://www.leaderdialog.com/blogs/jonkarner>>. Now that Jon is no longer with us on this side of the "great cloud of witnesses", let us whom he loved, and who loved him, memorialize his life's story of courage, faith and humility for the benefit of future generations.

*"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." (John 11:25-26)*